

PRAISE & WORSHIP 3



Introduction

Praise is a natural response to God's goodness. The Bible tells us to praise him 'with all that is within us'. Whatever is within us will be seen in our words and actions and on our faces. If someone is angry you can usually see it on their faces or in their eyes. If someone is excited you will not only see it on their faces, but often in the way they move their hands. And when we praise God it is natural that what is inside us will be expressed in our words, and in our actions. In the previous session we discovered different ways in which we can praise the Lord using our mouths. Let's continue by looking at how we can praise the Lord with our hands and our postures.

4. HOW DO WE PRAISE?

B. Our Hands

?? What are some of the ways in which we can use our hands to praise the Lord? Discuss.

A. Clapping Hands

Children often clap their hands when they are excited. Adults clap their hands to congratulate and honour those who have done well. It is a way we express joy, appreciation and praise. What reasons are given in the Word of God for clapping?

i. To express our joy

First of all it is a way to express our joy. Just as children express their delight in this way, so we as children of God, can express our delight in the Lord by clapping. There are several ways we can do this – by clapping as we sing, or we can have a time when we clap or applaud the Lord together.

Psalm 47:1 *'Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.'*

ii. To give honour to God

When someone of importance gives a speech, everyone claps. This is the way we express our appreciation and honour that person. In 2 Kings 11:12 the people clapped and shouted when Joash was crowned King. Our King is infinitely greater! He deserves our applause, our clapping, as he is King of all Kings.

iii. To bring down Satan's strongholds

Clapping is also a weapon against the enemy.

Psalm 144:1 *'Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.'*

David was a skilful soldier, who God used to conquer the wicked nations around Israel. God wants to train us to use our hands for spiritual warfare. The battles in the Old Testament teach us spiritual lessons. One of these weapons is praise. The clapping of hands can be a powerful weapon against the enemy.

B. Lifting Hands

Most of us probably don't find it difficult to clap our hands, as this is something everyone does at times. However we may find it more difficult to raise our hands.

?? Why do you think some Christians find it difficult to raise their hands when they worship?

Lamentations 3:41 *'Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to the God in heaven ..'*

Why should we lift up our hands?

i. To express our love to the Lord

Psalm 134:1-2 *'Praise the Lord all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.'*

In these verses it speaks about 'ministering' to the Lord. When we minister to other people we are blessing and strengthening them. When we worship and raise hands to the Lord, we minister to him!

ii. To reach out to God

David longed to know God more. One day when he was fleeing from King Saul in a desert place he cried out, "My soul longs for you", and then he went on to express his desire to be close to God.

Psalm 63:4 *'I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.'*

Have you watched a child reach out with his hands to his father or mother? Of course the parent will pick up the child. When we are reaching out to God in our hearts, it is natural to express that by raising our hands to him. And you can be sure he will not push you away!

iii. To surrender to God

If someone pointed a gun at you, what would you do? Raise your hands! Why? It shows that you are holding nothing to try and save yourself – you are surrendering. When we raise our hands to the Lord it is an expression of surrender. When the High Priest was consecrated to the Lord an offering was placed in his hands and he would wave this before the Lord. This was an act of surrender and dedication to God.

C. Playing Instruments

Musical instruments were first made by a man called Jubal, who was in the 7th generation after Adam. We are told in the book of Genesis that he developed the first harp and flute. So right from the beginning man has made music. By the time of King David there were many other kinds of musical instruments.

Psalm 150:3-5 *'Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet - the harp and lyre - tambourine - strings and flute - clash of cymbals.'*

Music is powerful and Satan knows this. He is using music to draw young people into worshipping him. We need to be careful what kind of music we listen to! God created music and gave man the ability to create instruments and made melodies, so the first reason why we use musical instruments should be to glorify God.

i. To glorify God

In Psalm 150 we are told to praise the Lord with the sounds of all the instruments. This brings glory to God. At times the music can be soft and gentle, as we focus on God's love and goodness, but then at other times, loud and powerful, reminding us of his greatness. When King Solomon dedicated the temple he had 120 trumpeters!

ii. To draw us into his presence

Music can prepare the way for the tangible presence of God to come into our midst. This is what happened at the dedication of the temple.

2 Chronicles 5:13-14 *'The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang ... then the temple of the Lord was filled with a cloud ...for the glory of the Lord filled the temple.'*

As the priests sang and played instruments the presence of God came in such a powerful way that they could see it as a cloud in their midst. Music that lifts up the name of the Lord, welcomes him into our midst.

iii. To drive away the enemy

We have seen that the enemy uses music, but music that glorifies the Lord drives the enemy away!

1 Samuel 16:23 *'Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.'*

King Saul was troubled by an evil spirit, but whenever David played his harp, the spirit would leave. Satan hates music that glorifies the Lord – it literally drives him away. Let us make sure that the music we have in our homes attracts the presence of the Lord.

Conclusion

We have learnt that we can use our hands to praise the Lord – by clapping them, or raising them, or by playing musical instruments. We are to praise the Lord with all our soul. This means that we use our will to choose to praise the Lord, our mind to focus on him, and our emotions to express our love for him. Make praise your lifestyle!